

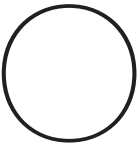
New build

CASE STUDY

# Totally BESPOKE

Steve and Paula Turpie have built a contemporary version of a Suffolk hall house designed to meet their family's specific needs.

STORY: **DEBBIE JEFFERY** PICTURES: **JACK HOBHOUSE**

//  Our previous home wasn't suitable for us as a family, and we'd been looking to move for some time, but just couldn't find anywhere we liked," says Steve Turpie. He and his wife, Paula, have three children – Hannah, 14, Lewis, 12, and Freya, 10, who is on the autistic spectrum. "We wanted a home which would provide for Freya's needs and could be adapted over time," Steve continues. "Then a 1970s house was advertised with planning permission already in place for a large extension, so we bought it."

Standing in more than 10 acres of tranquil grounds, beside a listed mediaeval church in a small West Suffolk village, the property offered the perfect location for a young family seeking space and privacy.

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## IN BRIEF

### PROJECT

New build in Suffolk

### FINANCE

**COST** £1.2m (10 acres and original house)

**SPENT** Undisclosed

### TOP TIP

Have a good team of people around you – cheapest isn't necessarily best – and spend money on the parts of the house which can't easily be changed.





### EXTERIOR AND GARDEN

The new house resembles a traditional Suffolk hall house, with pale red textured stock bricks contrasting against white render and oak joinery. European oak joinery has been finished externally with boiled linseed oil, and internally with Osmo matt hard wax oil.







Two streams run through the garden and there are a number of willow trees and lawned areas, creating a park-like setting which is still conveniently located for amenities.

“We weren’t particularly keen on the design of the extension which had been granted planning permission, so we had a chat to the planners before making an offer, and they were really encouraging,” says Steve. “We certainly never planned to knock the house down, but it was very poorly built and we were making so many compromises trying to work with what was there that in the end it seemed like the best option – especially as we would save on VAT for a new build.”

Steve and Paula approached London-based architecture and interiors studio Project Orange, who had been recommended by friends. Director Christopher Ash took the couple to visit his own new-build house in the heart of the picturesque Tudor village of Lavenham in Suffolk, and they instantly knew they had found the right architect.

“We have very similar tastes, and got a really good feel for the practice, who are extremely professional,” says Paula. “They listened to our brief and led us through the design process. Looking back there really isn’t anything we would change, and the outcome was brilliant.”

The new three-storey 450 sqm house which Project Orange designed is more than double the size of the previous 1970s property which stood on the sloping

#### HALLWAY

Routed oak-veneered MDF panelling creates a feature in the hallway, where a bank of glass doors open onto the courtyard beyond.







#### KITCHEN

The bespoke kitchen was made from shop-sprayed plywood carcasses with oak veneered doors and black honed finish granite worktops. Polished concrete flooring has a satin finish.

plot. It was carefully designed so that the traditional pitched roof, chimneys, white render, oak joinery and red brickwork reflect the local vernacular.

The building's detailing is altogether more contemporary, however, and mullions of all the oak windows have been equally spaced at intervals of 600mm, which creates a strong rhythm throughout the building.

Echoing the form of a traditional Suffolk hall house, there is a central double-height hall with two large cross wings. The main living/dining/kitchen is located in one wing, together with a utility room and a playroom.

The entrance hall, with a study off, connects to the smaller wing, containing a sitting room and a therapy room for Freya, which is also the headquarters for the Turpies' Brightstars charity for children with additional needs.

"We wanted to make the house as future-proof as possible, because Freya will always need support, and we needed a design which would be flexible enough to adapt as circumstances change," says Steve.

There are five en suite bedrooms on the first floor, including a guest suite, and the top floor of the house contains storage space and a mezzanine for Hannah's bedroom. There is also a large, open-plan room with a TV and sofas for the children, where friends can congregate for sleepovers and parties. "A lot of children come to the house, which we really love, and this gives them a relaxed place to go that we don't have to worry about," says Paula.

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**CONTACTS**

**PROJECT**

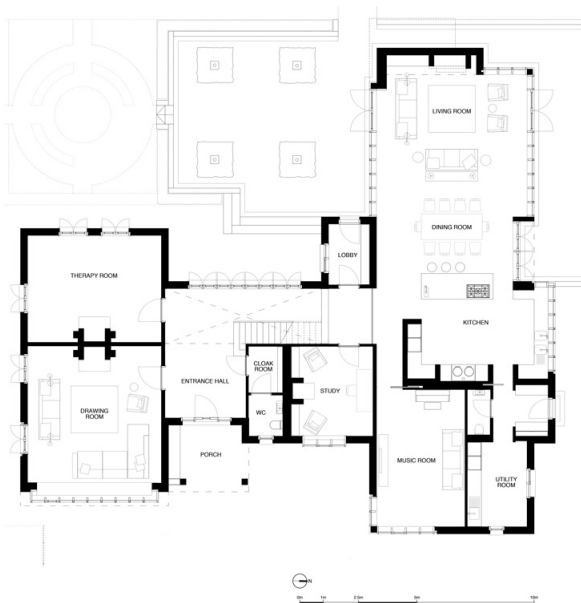
**Architect** Project Orange:  
projectorange.com  
**Builder** Robert  
Norman Construction:  
robertnormanltd.co.uk  
**Landscaping** Janey  
Auchincloss Designs:  
janeyauchinclossdesigns.com  
**Electrical contractor**  
Peter King Electrical Ltd:  
peterkingelectrical.co.uk

**STRUCTURE**

**Roofing** Lodge Roofing:  
lodge-roofing.co.uk  
**Ashdowne Aylesham  
clay plain roof tiles** Marley  
Eternit: marleyeternit.co.uk  
**Aqualine deep run  
rainwater goods** Alumasc:  
alumascrainwater.co.uk  
**Conservation roof light**  
The Rooflight Company:  
therooflightcompany.co.uk  
**Oak external doors and  
windows** Monarch Joinery  
Ltd: monarchjoinery.co.uk  
**External facing brick**  
Wienerberger 'Renaissance  
Multi': wienerberger.co.uk  
**Bricklayers** Cottrell Brickwork  
Ceramics Ltd: 01473 622310  
**Masonry paint** Dulux  
Weathershield: dulux.co.uk  
**External render** Knauf  
Marmorit: knauf.co.uk  
**Render application**  
R&B Plastering Ltd:  
randbplastering.co.uk

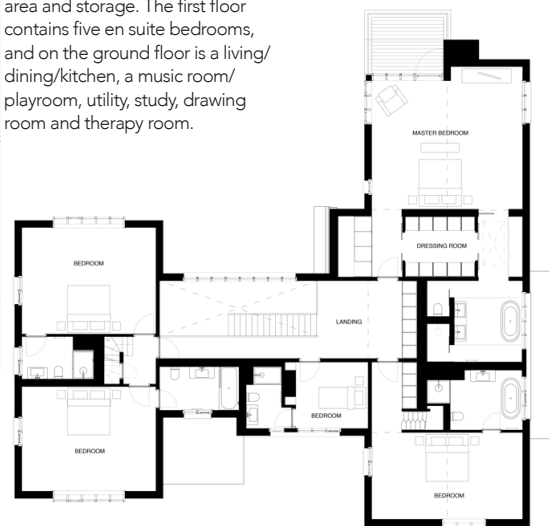
**FIXTURES AND FITTINGS**

**Engineered oak floors**  
Cathedral Flooring Ltd:  
cathedralflooring.co.uk  
**Polished concrete floors**  
Steyson Granolithic Contractors  
Ltd: steysonconcretefloors.co.uk  
**Bathroom** marmoleum  
Forbo: forbo.com  
**Brick pavers** Traditional  
Brick and Stone:  
traditionalbrickandstone.co.uk  
**Metro tiles** Tons of Tiles:  
tonsof tiles.co.uk  
**Domus honed limestone tiles**  
Fired Earth: firedearth.com  
**Ironmongery** Allgood:  
allgood.co.uk  
**Boiling tap** Insinkerator:  
insinkerator.co.uk  
**Cooker hood and appliances**  
Siemens: siemens.co.uk  
**Total Control AGA**  
AGA: agaliving.com  
**Woodburning stove  
and stone fire surround**  
Chesneys: chesneys.co.uk  
**Electric roller blinds**  
Electroblind: electroblind.co.uk  
**Electrical accessories** A&H  
Brass Ltd: ahbrass.co.uk  
**Underfloor heating** Nu-  
Heat Ltd: nu-heat.co.uk  
**WCs and basins** Duravit:  
duravit.co.uk  
**Baths and fillers** House of  
Harmony: house-of-harmony.co.uk

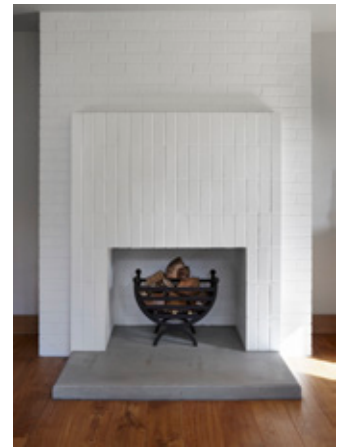


**THE FLOORPLAN**

The three-storey house has a large TV lounge/playroom on the upper level, together with a mezzanine area and storage. The first floor contains five en suite bedrooms, and on the ground floor is a living/dining/kitchen, a music room/playroom, utility, study, drawing room and therapy room.







Once planning permission had been granted the existing house could be demolished and the new property constructed on the same site. This locates the building deep within the plot, creating a generous foreground and an impressive approach, whilst respecting the setting of the adjacent mediaeval parish church.

"We absolutely loved Project Orange's design, and fortunately so did the planners," says Steve. "During the build we lived in our old house a few miles away, but it sold far more quickly than we expected, so we ended up moving in with Paula's mum."

The project was tendered to a number of local building companies, and was awarded to Robert Norman Construction. "It's difficult to go through a build without any debates, but we were so lucky to have such professional builders, who refused to compromise on quality, and the result is a really excellent finish," says Steve.

Raft foundations were required for the garage, which is close to the stream, with concrete trench foundations for the main house. A steel frame was constructed, with load-bearing masonry walls, and the majority of external walls have been finished in an insulated render, with smaller areas of contrasting brickwork. The roof was hand built on site, and has been clad in clay plain tiles.

"There are thousands of bricks and roof tiles on the market, but Project Orange suggested certain samples, which really simplified things," says Steve. "We didn't always agree with

#### LIVING AREA

High ceilings have been broken up with painted beams, and glass doors overlook the park-like gardens. Internally, fair-faced brickwork has been painted with smooth white masonry paint. A column of decorative maple logs features beside the wood-burner in the living area.





their choices, and undertook our own research, but generally speaking we ended up being led by their suggestions.”

Detailing has been kept to a minimum with flush door frames and shadow gaps instead of skirtings, and the oak of the window frames is echoed internally in the joinery finishes.

“We decided against having bifold doors, because we didn’t think we would open them that often, and instead we have double doors onto the garden,” Steve explains. “It’s those kind of details which we love, and which give the house its elegance.”

The staircase is a particular feature, with beautiful yet practical wall cladding serving as a contemporary version of traditional timber panelling.

“I’m fed up with painting and decorating, but everything in the house has been designed to be really

low maintenance, with polished concrete, white-painted bricks and oak joinery,” says Steve. “This is the first house we’ve moved into where nothing needs doing, and there’s something really nice about having everything new.”

Engineered oak boards and polished concrete flooring have been laid over underfloor heating, which runs throughout the house and was also used for Steve’s office above the garage.

Heating and hot water are connected to a ground source heat pump, which involved laying 1800m of coiled pipework in one-metre deep trenches in the garden.

“Technology moves so quickly, and soon everything will be wireless, so we didn’t want to spend thousands of pounds on gadgets that would become instantly outdated,” says Steve. “We do have things like a boiling water tap and



**BEDROOMS**

Vaulted bedrooms have 180mm wide engineered oak flooring, and benefit from electric roller blinds. The master bedroom opens through glass doors onto its own balcony, enjoying panoramic views.





a multi-room music system, though, with Cat-5 and Cat-6 to every room, so the house is reasonably future-proof.”

The build took just over a year to complete, and the family were able to move into their new home in August 2014. Their spacious open-plan kitchen/dining/living area is the heart of the home, where people congregate and visitors are entertained.

“It’s a very sociable space, with lovely views out onto the garden, and we’re lucky enough to be able to watch deer, cranes, kingfishers and woodpeckers just outside,” says Steve. “Now we have a beautiful, relaxing home where we can all thrive, and where we will hopefully live for many years to come. We feel very privileged to live here.”



## Final word

### WHAT WAS THE HIGH POINT OF YOUR PROJECT?

Every Saturday the family put on hard hats and walked around the house seeing how it was evolving.

### ...AND THE LOW POINT?

The amount of decisions which needed to be made – for example, we had to choose 78 individual light fittings.

### YOUR BEST BUY?

We shopped around and made savings on our bathroom tiles.

### ...AND THE BIGGEST EXTRAVAGANCE?

We have electrically-operated blinds in the house, and a tractor for the garden!



### GARDEN

The landscape setting of the house and the garden design have been developed through collaboration with Janey Auchincloss Designs.